

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter and Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Celina Frelinghuysen, and I am a sixteen-year-old student living in Greenwich, Connecticut. I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 827, An Act Concerning Blood Donation by Minors. Although it may seem like nothing is holding me back in life, that wasn't the case two years ago. In sixth grade I was diagnosed with Primary Immunodeficiency, a disease that could have been fatal, if not treated immediately. Even though it was a big shock, the diagnosis fit; I had been sick all my life, and no over the counter medicines seemed to work. However, the treatment for my illness was not one I welcomed easily. I learned that if I wanted to be healthy, I had to be infused once every three weeks with donor antibodies, otherwise known as immunoglobulin; one of the many proteins found in blood.

I can honestly say that I would not be here right now if it was not for the amazing pool of donors I have. Due to my experience, I believe that giving blood is one of the most incredible gifts a person can give to another in need. Nevertheless, the shortage of blood in Connecticut is growing day by day, and can only be helped by those that are fit to donate. The minimum age a donor must be in Connecticut is 17, which for most teens in high school is in either their junior or senior year. From my knowledge and experience, I believe teenagers are much more passionate to donate blood. I can confidently say many of my friends, who are sixteen as well, have offered giving blood to me, but have not been able to because of the age limit. If sixteen year olds are capable of driving, why shouldn't they be able to give blood?

Reducing the donation age by only one year will only help others, rather than hindering anyone. Please, think of those in need, and think of how much we could help.

Thank you,
Celina Frelinghuysen